

# VERBAL TABOO IN A COLLEGE COMMUNITY

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THIS article is the report of a study in verbal taboo undertaken during the college year 1936-1937 in a coeducational college in East Tennessee with a student enrolment of 800, approximately evenly divided between the northern and southern sections of the Eastern United States.

The interest which lies back of the study came first from a desire to check, in something like a scientific fashion, the current impression that the present generation of youth has no inhibitions in relation to word use as well as otherwise. But the list of words used, while homogeneous in that all have been felt to be socially questionable, is a varied list, and there are many incidental interests such as (1) the effects of change in physical conditions of life on the connotation of such words as *chamber, closet, corset, drawers*, (2) the present social status of such words as *bitch, bull, leg* for which no acceptable substitute was ever offered.

The word list which constituted the basis of the study was checked by practically the entire freshman class, about 280 students. It was also checked by a group of the faculty, about 48; and by a group of seniors, also about 48.<sup>1</sup> The text of the list is here given:

### *The Word List*

All of the listed words are ordinary English names of objects or actions. But from time to time people have intentionally avoided the use of some or all of these words because they considered them objectionable in some way—coarse, vulgar, or offensively suggestive. However, fashions and good taste change in language as elsewhere. Perhaps many of these words may not be at all offensive to you. The purpose of this test is to observe what changes, if any, are taking place in the standards of taste in English.

Place to the right of each word the number (1, 2, etc.) of the statement immediately below, which most nearly describes your attitude toward your personal use of it.

1. I use this word as freely as I use *arm, cat, dog, or run*.
2. I use this word at any time, but usually with a feeling of being bold, or 'modern.'
3. I use this word only when talking with those with whom I feel entirely free to talk naturally.
4. I never use this word if I can avoid it, because I feel it is offensive in some way.

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1. The number varies somewhat, because of failure on the part of some individuals to check every word.

5. I would not use this word. I would either substitute for it or refuse altogether to say it.

- |               |                  |                  |                         |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. abdomen—   | 17. corset—      | 33. mistress—    | 49. steal—              |
| 2. ass—       | 18. dam—         | 34. naked—       | 50. stench—             |
| 3. bastard—   | 19. die—         | 35. nasty—       | 51. stink—              |
| 4. belch—     | 20. drawers—     | 36. neck (verb)— | 52. stomach—            |
| 5. belly—     | 21. female—      | 37. pants—       | 53. suck—               |
| 6. bellyache— | 22. filthy—      | 38. pregnant—    | 54. sweat—              |
| 7. bitch—     | 23. fool—        | 39. prostitute—  | 55. thief—              |
| 8. bladder—   | 24. garter—      | 40. puke—        | 56. toilet—             |
| 9. bloat—     | 25. guts—        | 41. pus—         | 57. underwear—          |
| 10. breast—   | 26. harlot—      | 42. rotten—      | 58. victuals—           |
| 11. bull—     | 27. hearse—      | 43. scab—        | 59. vomit—              |
| 12. bugger—   | 28. itch (noun)— | 44. sex—         | 60. wet—                |
| 13. chamber—  | 29. leg—         | 45. sick—        | 61. whore—              |
| 14. closet—   | 30. lie—         | 46. slobber—     | 62. worms— <sup>2</sup> |
| 15. coffin—   | 31. louse—       | 47. spit (noun)  |                         |
| 16. corpse—   | 32. manure—      | 48. squat—       |                         |

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ State in which you were reared \_\_\_\_\_

Birth year \_\_\_\_\_ Brought up in (country \_\_\_\_\_, town \_\_\_\_\_, city \_\_\_\_\_).

Check one of these.

In compiling the results of these checkings we have attempted to get at two matters, (1) the comparative attitude of the three groups taken on the basis of their educational advancement: freshmen, seniors, faculty; and (2) the comparative attitude taken on the basis of sex.

The tabulation will be self-explanatory in the main. We seek to clarify one or two points. The numbers across the top of the column, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, correspond to the five possible attitudes toward the words. At one extreme, 1 means: 'I use this word freely . . .'; at the other, 5 means: 'I would not use this word.' Beneath each figure it is possible to find the number of men and women, freshman, senior, or faculty, who took the indicated attitude toward each word.

The heavily-ruled dividing line between column 2 and column 3 in the tabulations for 'Men' and for 'Women' is a means of distinguishing between attitudes 1 and 2, on the one hand, which represent freedom of use, and 3, 4, and 5, on the other hand, which represent restraint or inhibition regarding the use of the word. We proceed to record percentage of freedom of use for each sex and classification, and in the last column on the right, for the entire classification. That is, with the first word: of 121 freshman men, 107 check attitude 1 or 2, a percentage of freedom of 88.4; of 139

2. Many of the words in this list were suggested by similar lists in Professor J. M. Steadman's 'A Study of Verbal Taboo,' *American Speech*, April, 1935.

freshman women, 101 check attitudes 1 or 2, a percentage of freedom of 72.6. For the entire freshman group of 260 checking this particular word, 208 check attitude 1 or 2, a percentage of freedom of 80.

TABULATION OF DATA

	MEN					WOMEN					ALL % of Freedom
	Free 1	2	3	4	5 % of Freedom	Free 1	2	3	4	5 % of Freedom	
<b>1. ABDOMEN</b>											
Freshmen	99	8	11	1	2 88.4	90	11	24	13	1 72.6	80.0
Seniors	17	2	2		90.4	22	2	2		92.3	91.4
Faculty	17	1	1		94.7	19	2	3	2	80.7	86.6
Totals	133	11	14	1	2 89.4	131	15	29	15	1 76.4	82.3
<b>2. ASS</b>											
Freshmen	14	16	41	36	13 25.0	24	13	22	51	44 24.0	24.4
Seniors	4	7	8	2	52.3	7	1	4	12	2 30.7	40.4
Faculty	3	5	9	4	1 36.3	4	4	4	10	4 30.7	33.3
Totals	21	28	58	42	14 30.0	35	18	30	73	50 25.7	27.6
<b>3. BASTARD</b>											
Freshmen	3	4	41	37	37 5.7	6	6	16	28	68 9.6	7.7
Seniors	3	1	7	8	5 16.6	4	2	9	6	5 23.0	20.0
Faculty	8	2	3	5	5 43.4	4	6	4	10	4 35.7	39.2
Totals	14	7	51	50	47 12.4	14	14	29	44	77 15.7	14.1
<b>4. BELCH</b>											
Freshmen	37	12	32	19	10 44.5	31	8	49	44	18 26.0	33.8
Seniors	4	2	8	7	28.5	7	1	3	8	7 30.7	29.7
Faculty	6	4	6	4	1 47.5	1	2	6	14	3 11.6	27.6
Totals	47	18	46	30	11 42.7	39	11	58	66	28 24.7	32.4
<b>5. BELLY</b>											
Freshmen	18	11	47	25	23 23.3	5	6	31	52	63 7.0	14.2
Seniors	3	4	5	8	1 33.3	1		4	12	9 3.8	17.0
Faculty	5	4	8	4	2 39.1	1	1	1	12	12 7.4	22.0
Totals	26	19	60	37	26 26.7	7	7	36	76	84 6.6	15.6
<b>6. BELLYACHE</b>											
Freshmen	22	9	48	20	22 25.6	5	11	33	38	75 9.8	16.6
Seniors	4	3	9	3	1 35.0			5	9	12 0.0	15.2
Faculty	4	6	7	3	3 43.4	1		3	6	7 5.8	27.5
Totals	30	18	64	26	26 29.2	6	11	41	53	94 8.2	17.6
<b>7. BITCH</b>											
Freshmen	7	4	42	35	35 8.9	4	3	11	32	95 4.8	6.7
Seniors		1	9	5	4 5.2	2	1	3	8	10 12.5	9.3
Faculty	4	1	7	5	5 22.7	1	2	2	6	14 12.0	17.0
Totals	11	6	58	45	44 10.3	7	6	16	46	119 6.7	8.3
<b>8. BLADDER</b>											
Freshmen	53	17	30	13	5 59.3	46	5	64	24	10 34.2	45.3
Seniors	13	1	5	2	66.6	15	1	8	2	61.5	63.8
Faculty	13	3	7		69.5	18	1	6	1	1 70.3	70.0
Totals	79	21	42	15	5 61.7	79	7	78	27	11 42.5	51.0

## AMERICAN SPEECH

	MEN					WOMEN					ALL % of Freedom		
	Free 1	2	3	4	5 Freedom	Free 1	2	3	4	5 Freedom			
<b>9. BLOAT</b>													
Freshmen	54	7	30	6	11	56.4	36	6	39	40	14	31.1	42.3
Seniors	11	3	5	2		66.6	9	1	8	3	3	41.6	53.3
Faculty	18	3	1	1		91.3	14		9	4	1	50.0	68.6
Totals	83	13	36	9	11	63.1	59	7	56	47	18	35.2	47.7
<b>10. BREAST</b>													
Freshmen	65	16	31	7	3	66.3	44	12	66	20	3	38.6	51.3
Seniors	13	3	4	1		76.1	15	2	6	1	2	65.3	70.2
Faculty	15	6		2		91.3	15	1	11		1	57.1	72.5
Totals	93	25	35	10	3	71.0	74	15	83	21	6	44.7	56.7
<b>11. BULL</b>													
Freshmen	81	10	18	4		80.5	73	14	24	28	15	56.4	66.6
Seniors	17	4				100	23	1	1	1		92.3	95.7
Faculty	11	4	7	1		65.2	14	1	7	4	1	55.5	60.0
Totals	109	18	25	5		80.8	110	16	32	33	16	60.8	69.5
<b>12. BUGGER</b>													
Freshmen	21	9	21	20	23	31.9	10	3	9	35	38	13.6	22.7
Seniors	6	3	5	3	3	45.0	2		4	8	12	7.6	23.9
Faculty	6	2	6	4	3	38.0	7	1	2	5	9	33.3	35.5
Totals	33	14	32	27	29	34.8	19	4	15	48	59	15.8	25.0
<b>13. CHAMBER</b>													
Freshmen	81	9	18	8	5	74.3	65	14	36	35	14	48.1	59.2
Seniors	12	4	4	1		76.1	16	2	2	6		69.2	72.3
Faculty	14	4	1	4		78.2	14	1	7	2	3	55.5	66.0
Totals	107	17	23	13	5	75.1	95	17	45	43	17	51.6	61.7
<b>14. CLOSET</b>													
Freshmen	107		8	5	2	87.7	123	4	12	12	2	83.0	85.0
Seniors	19	1	1			95.2	24		2	2		92.3	93.6
Faculty	18	3	2			91.3	25		3			89.2	90.1
Totals	144	4	11	5	2	89.1	172	4	15	14	2	85.0	86.8
<b>15. COFFIN</b>													
Freshmen	110	1	4	8	3	88.0	139	1	8	8	1	89.1	88.6
Seniors	21					100	24			1	1	92.3	95.7
Faculty	19	1	1	1	1	86.9	26		1		1	92.8	90.1
Totals	150	2	5	9	4	89.4	189	1	9	9	3	90.0	89.7
<b>16. CORPSE</b>													
Freshmen	108	3	4	6	4	88.8	133	1	7	11	4	85.8	87.1
Seniors	18		1	2		85.7	23			1	2	88.4	87.2
Faculty	20		3	1		83.3	25		1	2		89.2	86.5
Totals	146	3	8	9	4	87.6	181	1	8	14	6	86.6	87.1
<b>17. CORSET</b>													
Freshmen	53	14	42	9	4	54.9	56	8	81	8	3	41.0	47.1
Seniors	8	7	4	2		71.4	10	2	13	1		46.1	57.4
Faculty	8	5	7	2		59.0	11	1	15	1		42.8	50.6
Totals	69	26	53	13	4	57.5	77	11	109	10	3	41.9	48.8

VERBAL TABOO

	MEN					WOMEN					ALL		
	Free 1	2	Restrained 3	4	% of 5 Freedom	Free 1	2	Restrained 3	4	% of 5 Freedom	% of Freedom		
<b>18. DAM</b>													
Freshmen	73	10	23	12	5	67.4	72	18	8	16	42	57.6	62.0
Seniors	14	3	1	2	1	80.9	20	2	1	3	84.6	82.9	82.9
Faculty	16	2	2	1	2	78.2	19		1	3	4	70.3	74.0
Totals	103	15	26	15	8	70.6	111	20	9	20	49	62.6	66.2
<b>19. DIE</b>													
Freshmen	115	2	2	2	1	95.9	151	3	2	1		98.0	97.1
Seniors	21					100	25					100	100
Faculty	20	1	1	1		91.3	27					100	96.0
Totals	156	3	3	3	1	95.7	203	3	2	1		98.5	97.3
<b>20. DRAWERS</b>													
Freshmen	54	11	30	14	11	54.1	77	8	32	15	20	55.9	55.1
Seniors	7	4	4	6		52.3	14	2	4	5	1	61.5	57.4
Faculty	10	3	8	1	1	56.5	16	2	9	1		64.3	60.7
Totals	71	18	42	21	12	54.2	107	12	45	21	21	57.7	56.2
<b>21. FEMALE</b>													
Freshmen	94	14	12	1	2	87.8	123	7	17	7	3	82.8	85.0
Seniors	19	1		1		95.2	24	1	1			96.1	95.7
Faculty	17	3	3			86.9	20		3	4		74.0	80.0
Totals	130	18	15	2	2	88.6	167	8	21	11	3	83.3	85.6
<b>22. FILTHY</b>													
Freshmen	92	5	17	7		80.1	109	6	15	18	7	74.1	76.8
Seniors	14	3	3	1		80.9	25		1			96.1	89.3
Faculty	22		1			95.6	19		4	4		70.3	82.0
Totals	128	8	21	8		82.4	153	6	20	22	7	76.4	79.0
<b>23. FOOL</b>													
Freshmen	83	4	18	14	4	70.7	71	15	11	37	22	55.1	62.0
Seniors	16	2	1	2		85.7	20	2	1	2	1	84.6	85.1
Faculty	20	1	2			91.3	19	1	2	5		74.0	82.0
Totals	119	7	21	16	4	75.4	110	18	14	44	23	61.2	67.5
<b>24. GARTER</b>													
Freshmen	75	9	32	3	1	70.0	70	11	61	8	3	52.9	60.4
Seniors	12	5	4			80.9	15	1	9	1		61.5	70.2
Faculty	14	3	4	1		77.2	15		9	2		57.6	66.6
Totals	101	17	40	4	1	72.3	100	12	79	11	3	54.6	62.5
<b>25. GUTS</b>													
Freshmen	19	13	44	33	13	26.2	7	6	21	46	75	8.3	16.2
Seniors	3	3	6	5	3	30.0	3	1	4	12	6	15.3	21.7
Faculty	1	5	6	5	6	26.0	2	1	2	10	13	10.7	17.6
Totals	23	21	56	43	22	26.6	12	8	27	68	94	9.5	17.1
<b>26. HARLOT</b>													
Freshmen	9	7	30	24	21	17.5	9	2	19	27	48	10.4	13.7
Seniors	5	3	6	6	1	38.0	5	2	7	10	2	26.9	31.9
Faculty	5	4	10	2	1	40.9	1	4	8	5	7	20.0	29.7
Totals	19	14	46	32	23	24.6	15	8	34	42	57	14.7	19.3

## AMERICAN SPEECH

	MEN					WOMEN					ALL
	Free		Restrained		% of	Free		Restrained		% of	% of
	1	2	3	4	5 Freedom	1	2	3	4	5 Freedom	Freedom
<b>27. HEARSE</b>											
Freshmen	102	3	6	5	3 88.2	122	3	10	9	6 83.3	85.5
Seniors	20		1		95.2	21		1	3	1 80.7	87.2
Faculty	20		2	1	86.9	26		1		96.2	92.0
Totals	142	3	9	6	3 88.9	169	3	12	12	7 84.7	86.6
<b>28. ITCH (NOUN)</b>											
Freshmen	68	10	25	7	3 69.0	71	7	37	29	6 52.0	59.3
Seniors	12	4	5		76.1	15	1	1	5	3 64.0	69.5
Faculty	16	2	4	1	78.2	15		6	3	62.5	70.2
Totals	96	16	34	8	3 71.3	101	8	44	37	9 54.7	62.0
<b>29. LEG</b>											
Freshmen	115	5	3		97.5	140	6	7	3	1 92.9	95.0
Seniors	18	1	2		90.4	26				100	95.7
Faculty	17	3	2	1	86.9	22	1	4	1	82.1	84.3
Totals	150	9	7	1	95.2	188	7	11	4	1 92.4	93.6
<b>30. LIE</b>											
Freshmen	108	3	8	2	1 90.9	121	9	6	16	4 83.3	86.6
Seniors	19	1	1		95.2	25			1	96.1	95.7
Faculty	21	1	1		95.6	24		2	2	85.7	90.1
Totals	148	5	10	2	1 92.1	170	9	8	19	4 85.2	88.2
<b>31. LOUSE</b>											
Freshmen	59	15	27	11	9 61.1	65	13	31	28	14 51.6	55.8
Seniors	9	5	3	2	1 70.0	13	1	3	5	4 53.8	60.8
Faculty	14	5	1		86.3	16	1	3	5	2 62.9	73.4
Totals	82	25	31	13	12 65.6	94	15	37	38	20 53.4	58.8
<b>32. MANURE</b>											
Freshmen	52	15	33	15	4 56.3	29	11	33	45	36 25.9	39.1
Seniors	6	1	10	3	35.0	11	3	5	4	3 53.8	45.6
Faculty	9	4	6	3	1 56.5	10	1	7	8	2 39.2	47.0
Totals	67	20	49	21	5 53.7	50	15	45	57	41 31.2	41.0
<b>33. MISTRESS</b>											
Freshmen	74	10	24	8	6 68.8	78	14	23	17	13 63.4	65.9
Seniors	13	5	3		85.7	17	3	4		1 80.0	82.6
Faculty	13	4	5		77.2	14	4	5	3	1 66.6	71.4
Totals	100	19	32	8	6 72.1	109	21	32	20	15 65.8	68.7
<b>34. NAKED</b>											
Freshmen	71	15	28	3	3 71.6	56	10	62	21	8 42.0	54.5
Seniors	10	8	3		85.7	16	2	5	2	1 69.2	76.5
Faculty	17	3	2	1	86.9	17	3	5	1	2 71.4	78.4
Totals	98	26	33	4	3 75.6	89	15	72	24	11 49.2	60.8
<b>35. NASTY</b>											
Freshmen	79	8	15	13	5 72.5	77	9	25	32	14 54.7	62.4
Seniors	12	2	1	5	70.0	15		1	8	2 57.6	63.0
Faculty	11	3	6	2	1 60.8	11	1	7	5	1 48.0	54.1
Totals	102	13	22	20	6 70.5	103	10	33	45	17 54.3	61.4

# VERBAL TABOO

103

	MEN					WOMEN					ALL
	Free		Restrained		% of	Free		Restrained		% of	% of
	1	2	3	4	5 Freedom	1	2	3	4	5 Freedom	Freedom
<b>36. NECK (VERB)</b>											
Freshmen	45	32	30	7	6 64.1	49	34	37	13	23 53.2	57.9
Seniors	9	8	2	2	80.9	9	2	2	10	2 44.0	60.8
Faculty	6	9	2	3	3 65.2	5	6	2	3	10 42.3	53.0
Totals	60	49	34	12	9 66.4	63	42	41	26	35 50.7	57.6
<b>37. PANTS</b>											
Freshmen	106	4	7	2	2 90.9	95	16	32	8	5 71.1	79.7
Seniors	18	2			100	18	2	3	2	1 76.9	86.9
Faculty	20	2	1		95.6	16		7	3	2 57.1	74.5
Totals	144	8	8	2	2 92.6	129	18	42	13	8 70.0	79.9
<b>38. PREGNANT</b>											
Freshmen	17	8	68	21	7 20.6	31	3	102	15	7 21.5	21.1
Seniors	6	2	12	1	38.0	11	1	14		46.1	42.5
Faculty	7	3	11	1	1 43.4	13	2	11	1	55.5	50.0
Totals	30	13	91	23	8 26.0	55	6	127	16	7 28.9	27.6
<b>39. PROSTITUTE</b>											
Freshmen	21	10	51	25	5 27.6	20	5	47	34	13 21.0	24.2
Seniors	6	5	10		52.3	9	2	8	5	1 44.0	47.8
Faculty	9	3	6	5	52.1	7	4	8	3	3 44.0	47.9
Totals	36	18	67	30	5 34.6	36	11	63	42	17 27.8	31.0
<b>40. PUKE</b>											
Freshmen	6	6	28	36	34 10.9	7	5	5	41	79 8.7	9.7
Seniors			2	11	7 0.0	2	1	1	5	16 12.0	6.6
Faculty	2	4	4	6	11 8.6		1	7	19	3.7	6.0
Totals	6	8	34	53	52 9.1	9	7	6	53	114 8.4	8.7
<b>41. PUS</b>											
Freshmen	46	7	27	30	12 43.4	40	5	28	43	34 30.0	36.0
Seniors	9	1	5	5	1 47.6	15	1	2	5	3 61.5	55.3
Faculty	14	1	6	2	65.2	14		4	7	3 50.0	56.8
Totals	69	9	38	37	13 46.9	69	6	34	55	40 36.7	41.0
<b>42. ROTTEN</b>											
Freshmen	94	2	14	8	5 78.0	97	2	21	21	12 64.7	70.6
Seniors	13	2	3	3	71.4	21		2	2	1 80.7	76.5
Faculty	16	2	4	2	75.0	17	2	3	3	1 73.0	74.0
Totals	123	6	21	13	5 76.7	135	4	26	26	14 67.8	71.8
<b>43. SCAB</b>											
Freshmen	59	5	29	18	12 52.0	72	3	17	43	18 49.0	50.3
Seniors	11	1	5	4	57.1	14		2	10	53.8	55.3
Faculty	13	3	4	3	69.5	18	1	2	4	2 70.3	70.0
Totals	83	9	38	25	12 55.0	104	4	21	57	20 52.4	53.6
<b>44. SEX</b>											
Freshmen	92	16	13	1	1 87.8	92	16	36	10	3 68.7	77.1
Seniors	19	2			100	23		3		88.4	93.6
Faculty	19		3	1	82.6	19	3	3	1	1 81.4	82.0
Totals	130	18	16	2	1 88.6	134	19	42	11	4 72.8	79.8

## AMERICAN SPEECH

	MEN					WOMEN					ALL		
	Free		Restrained		% of	Free		Restrained		% of	% of		
	1	2	3	4	5 Freedom	1	2	3	4	5 Freedom	Freedom		
<b>45. SICK</b>													
Freshmen	119		2	2	96.7	137		16	2	1	87.8	91.7	
Seniors	21				100	25					100	100	
Faculty	22		1		95.6	25		1			96.1	95.9	
Totals	162		3	2	97.0	187		17	2	1	90.3	93.3	
<b>46. SLOBBER</b>													
Freshmen	27	6	36	34	18	27.2	30	2	27	57	36	21.0	23.8
Seniors	5	2	5	8	1	33.3	5		4	11	5	20.0	26.0
Faculty	7	4	5	5	2	47.8	8		3	8	8	29.6	38.0
Totals	39	12	46	47	21	30.9	43	2	34	76	49	22.0	26.0
<b>47. SPIT (NOUN)</b>													
Freshmen	51	5	31	29	6	45.9	48	5	24	49	28	34.4	39.4
Seniors	9	3	3	3	2	60.0	5		2	15	4	19.2	36.9
Faculty	7	1	4	9	2	34.7	5		5	7	9	19.2	26.5
Totals	67	9	38	41	10	46.0	58	5	31	71	41	30.5	37.4
<b>48. SQUAT</b>													
Freshmen	48	4	28	27	14	42.9	36	7	28	43	43	27.3	34.1
Seniors	4	1	10	3	3	23.8	12	1	1	7	7	46.4	36.7
Faculty	11	3	4		4	63.6	9		4	7	7	33.3	46.9
Totals	63	8	42	30	21	43.2	57	8	33	57	57	30.6	36.1
<b>49. STEAL</b>													
Freshmen	117		4	1	1	95.1	141	3	5	7	1	91.7	93.2
Seniors	21					100	25			1		96.1	97.8
Faculty	22		1			95.6	27		1			96.4	96.0
Totals	160		5	1	1	95.7	193	3	6	8	1	92.8	94.1
<b>50. STENCH</b>													
Freshmen	61	10	21	7	11	64.5	38	4	11	28	22	40.7	53.0
Seniors	8	3	3	4	2	55.0	9	1	6	7	3	38.4	45.6
Faculty	14	3	5		1	73.9	12	1	4	7	3	48.1	60.0
Totals	83	16	29	11	14	64.7	59	6	21	42	28	41.6	53.1
<b>51. STINK</b>													
Freshmen	36	13	31	23	18	40.5	19	4	27	58	49	14.6	25.8
Seniors	4	2	7	4	3	30.0	5	1	3	10	7	23.0	26.0
Faculty	9	2	6	3	3	47.8	3		7	7	11	10.7	27.4
Totals	49	17	44	30	24	40.2	27	5	37	75	67	15.1	26.1
<b>52. STOMACH</b>													
Freshmen	119		4			96.7	131	3	19	2	2	85.3	90.3
Seniors	20	1				100	24	2				100	100
Faculty	22		1			95.6	22	1	5			82.1	88.2
Totals	161	1	5			97.0	177	6	24	2	2	86.7	91.2
<b>53. SUCK</b>													
Freshmen	55	8	34	18	7	51.6	41	6	32	38	38	30.3	39.7
Seniors	9	3	6	2	1	57.1	14	2	3	3	4	61.5	59.5
Faculty	13	2	4	4		65.2	13	2	4	6	3	53.5	58.8
Totals	77	13	44	24	8	54.2	68	10	39	47	45	37.3	44.8

VERBAL TABOO

	MEN					WOMEN					ALL		
	Free	Restrained	% of		Freedom	Free	Restrained	% of		Freedom	% of		
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	Freedom		
<b>54. SWEAT</b>													
Freshmen	88	5	21	4	4	76.2	80	5	22	29	21	54.1	63.7
Seniors	16	1	4			80.9	14		3	6	3	53.8	65.9
Faculty	14	3	3	1	2	73.9	10	1	6	6	5	39.2	54.9
Totals	118	9	28	5	6	76.5	104	6	31	41	29	52.1	62.8
<b>55. THIEF</b>													
Freshmen	118	2	1	1	1	97.5	140	2	7	8		90.4	93.5
Seniors	20				1	95.2	24		2			92.3	93.6
Faculty	22		1			95.6	28					100	98.0
Totals	160	2	2	2	1	97.0	192	2	7	10		91.9	94.1
<b>56. TOILET</b>													
Freshmen	63	7	38	11	3	57.3	42	5	74	24	12	29.9	41.9
Seniors	8	1	8	2		47.3	10	2	8	4	2	46.1	46.6
Faculty	11	4	8			65.2	14	2	12			57.1	60.7
Totals	82	12	54	13	3	57.3	66	9	94	28	14	35.5	45.8
<b>57. UNDERWEAR</b>													
Freshmen	79	7	32	5		69.9	83	8	50	5	1	61.9	65.5
Seniors	13	5	3			85.7	19	1	6			76.9	80.8
Faculty	14	4	5			78.2	22		4			84.6	81.6
Totals	106	16	40	5		73.0	124	9	60	5	1	66.8	69.6
<b>58. VICTUALS</b>													
Freshmen	70	6	11	10	12	69.7	66	4	15	19	34	50.7	59.1
Seniors	14	4	1		2	85.7	13		1	4	8	50.0	65.9
Faculty	17	2	2		2	82.6	12		1	8	7	42.8	60.7
Totals	101	12	14	10	16	73.8	91	4	17	31	49	49.4	60.2
<b>59. VOMIT</b>													
Freshmen	56	10	36	14	5	54.5	60	9	32	33	22	44.2	48.7
Seniors	8	1	7	4	1	42.8	13	1	3	7	1	56.0	50.0
Faculty	11	2	6	4		56.5	5	1	9	7	5	22.2	38.0
Totals	75	13	49	22	6	53.3	78	11	44	47	28	42.7	47.4
<b>60. WET</b>													
Freshmen	101	1	14	7		82.9	113	7	19	12	6	76.4	79.2
Seniors	18	2	1			95.2	26					100	97.8
Faculty	22		1			95.6	24	1	1	1	1	89.2	92.1
Totals	141	3	16	7		86.2	163	8	20	13	7	81.0	83.3
<b>61. WHORE</b>													
Freshmen	9	5	46	24	30	12.2	4	2	19	31	49	5.7	9.1
Seniors	2	1	7	8	3	14.2	4		5	7	10	15.3	14.8
Faculty		1	10	5	6	4.5	1	2	5	6	14	10.7	8.0
Totals	11	7	63	37	39	11.4	9	4	29	44	73	8.1	9.8
<b>62. WORMS</b>													
Freshmen	92	4	21	4		79.3	106	5	24	16	5	71.1	74.7
Seniors	16	2	1	2		85.7	22		1	3		84.6	85.1
Faculty	17	1	3	1	1	78.2	23	2		1	1	92.5	86.0
Totals	125		25	7	1	80.0	151	7	25	20	6	75.5	77.5

## FREEDOM OF USE IN RELATION TO EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

In general the results indicate that by far the greatest restraint is felt by freshmen and by far the greatest freedom is felt by seniors. This simple tabulation indicates the number out of the 62 words in regard to which each of the groups showed comparatively the most restraint.

TABLE SHOWING GREATEST DEGREE OF RESTRAINT

<i>Class</i>	<i>Number of Words</i>		<i>Percentage</i>
Freshman, most restrained on	45	or	72.58
Senior, most restrained on	2	or	3.22
Faculty, most restrained on	15	or	24.19

The restraint of the freshmen is really notable in a large proportion of the 45 words. In the use of 17 words<sup>3</sup> they are more than 10 percentage points behind the next group, and for 4 of these<sup>4</sup> they fall 20 percentage points or more behind the next group. Besides age, one reason for this greater restraint may be that they have felt, more than the experienced students, that a project in a class room with a teacher handing out the papers called for decorous checking on their part; but, after all, that is one of the aspects of taboo.

The freedom of the seniors is only less remarkable. While actually they fall behind both of the other groups in degree of restraint on only 2 words, they are indeed behind the freshmen on 3 others,<sup>5</sup> and behind the faculty on 24 others,<sup>6</sup> making 27 cases of being in second place, and 2 of being in third. There are no such gaps, as were observed in regard to the freshmen, between seniors and faculty.

The faculty freedom is shown not only by a relatively small number (15) of words in which they showed greatest degree of restraint, but also by the fact that there were 26 of the 62 words regarding which they showed highest degree of freedom.

## FREEDOM OF USE IN RELATION TO SEX

In general the results indicate that in regard to a large number of the words the women show greater restraint than the men. However, in regard to two words<sup>7</sup> all classifications of the women are freer from restraint than the corresponding groups of men; and in regard to one other<sup>8</sup> the freshman and faculty women are freer than the corresponding men, and the senior women and men both indicate 100% freedom. Otherwise the freedom of

3. Words 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 18, 23, 26, 28, 34, 38, 39, 41, 53, 57, 60, and 62.

4. Words 23, 34, 38, and 39.

5. Words 4, 40, and 47.

6. Words 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 20, 27, 28, 31, 32, 34, 38, 39, 41, 43, 46, 48, 51, 55, 56, 57, and 62.

7. Words 20 and 38.

8. Word 19.

the men is clearly greater than that of the women. There are 30 words on which all classes of men are freer than the corresponding classes of women; 23 on which two classes of men are freer than the corresponding classes of women; and 4 on which only one class of men is freer. Or, taken in another fashion, the percentage of freedom based on the total checkings for all the words is, for the men, 63.33; for the women, 52.04, leaving a difference of 11.26 percentage points, certainly a significant difference. Of course, this is not evenly distributed. Indeed, in the case of 16 words the difference is 20 or more percentage points. Freshman men are freer than their sisters on 57 of the 62 words; senior men are freer than senior women on 38, leaving the women freer on 21, and equally free on 3; faculty men are freer than faculty women on 49.

Many aspects of this study remain for further treatment. For example, we have made no analysis of our data as related to section of the country, or as to whether the subjects were reared in city, village, or rural environment, although we have the facts upon which to base such a study. Also we have made no analysis of the words toward which great or little restraint is indicated. We have limited our endeavor to setting forth the facts regarding the attitude toward a selected group of words, felt to be more or less objectionable, of persons classified (1) on the basis of educational advancement and (2) on the basis of sex.

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#### HOLLYWOOD NOTES

'At the premiere of Wee Willie Winkie with Eddie Cantor at the microphone introducing the *glitterous* and glamorous as they came in, Shirley Temple pronounced the occasion a joyous one,' testified *Modern Screen* for October, 1937.

Harold Heffernan in a syndicated article from Hollywood for December 19, 1937, observes that 'One of the screen's consistent *baddies*, Bruce Cabot, feels the effect of the regime of vigorous villains.'

A writer in *Modern Screen* for October, 1937, discussing a practical joke played by Margaret Sullavan, comments, 'And a lotta people think Maggie hasn't a *sensayuma*.'

George Oakden and Martin Porter in *The New Masses*, October 26, 1937, p. 18, wrote of Hollywood journalists, 'Their vernacular divides the failures into three subdivisions: flop, *flopperoo*, and kerplunk.'

